5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva

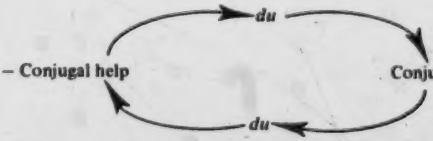


principally referring to classificatory systems built up from such metaphoric oppositions. When I use the term 'metaphoric gift', I mean a gift about which we are told in a story, the message of the story being that gift and recipient are metaphorically identical. The point of the story is to establish the symbiosis of men and women, the use of the metaphor. An example of such a story would be the gift of sacred emblems to the infant Dionysus in Orphic myth. This story tells us how Dionysus received certain gifts (cone, bullroarer, golden apples, mirror, knuckle-bone, tuft of wool) which de ined his nature. In the same way, in Orokaiva myth, men are given a coconut nature and women an areca nature.

Orokaiva informants offer what they regard as empirical evidence for this. Coconut may be recognised as a man because the palm germinates slowly and the fruit comes to maturity slowly ('it comes slowly'). Likewise, so I was told, the male is slow to be sexually aroused and to desire women. *Areca* may be recognised as a girl because it germinates and comes to maturity quickly – the fruit matures faster than the coconut. Likewise woman is quick to be sexually aroused and to feel desire for a man. In this analogy the botanical facts are evident but the psychological generalisations describe no more, perhaps, than Orokaiva role expectations.

We may clarify the myth and its philosophical message to a certain extent by an analysis on the level of exchange cycles. The fundamental cycle is obviously the following:

MODEL 29




This is the model of sister exchange marriage where two men become brothers-in-law by each giving their sisters (*du*) to the other in marriage. If we now remember the identification between woman and betelnut (*sā*), and the social relationship which is considered normal between *dambo*, we may substitute as follows:

MODEL 30

We thus derive the rather interesting conclusion that the sense of an exchange of betelnut between men is that they are symbolically exchanging sisters. This is a rather bold conclusion which is best left as a speculation to be explored in later